AKIRA 33™

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AKIRA

BY KATSUHIRO OTOMO

Chapter 33

STRIKE FROM SPACE

WHAT HAS GONE BEFORE

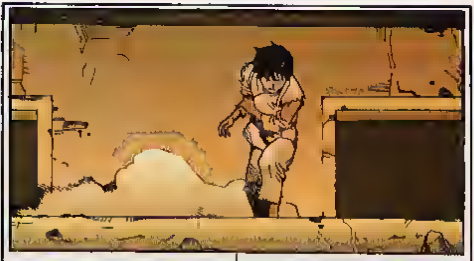
2030. The world hovers on the brink of World War IV. **Kaneda,** one time leader of a delinquent gang, is caught up in the aftermath of a power struggle between a Japanese military research organization — led by a man known only as the **Colonel** — and a resistance group whose members included **Kay, Ryu,** and a formidable woman named **Chiyoko.**

The **Colonel** had a number of psychic children under his control. Each is identified by a numbered tatoo on the hand. Among the children were **Kiyoko** and **Masaru — Numbers 25** and **27.** The blind **Lady Miyoko — Number 19 —** was once among their ranks but now heads a great religious cult. **Number 41** is **Tetsuo,** once Kaneda's friend, but now his greatest enemy. **Tetsuo** lost his left arm to a laser blast from the Colonel's military satellite **SOL,** and has used cybernetics and telekinesis to fabricate for himself a prosthetic replacement.

Most powerful of all the children is **Number 28 — Akira.** He is a docile and enigmatic boy who was placed in a cryogenic sleep almost forty years ago when he started the World War III with a mental blast. He was recently reawakened by **Tetsuo,** and again he devestated the reconstructed city of **Neo-Tokyo.** Now Japan exists in a state of emergency. The forces of the army and the resistence are scattered, and the military's formidable "caretaker robots" patrol the streets.

In the western part of **Neo-Tokyo** the **Great Tokyo Empire** is formed — a monarchy with **Akira** on the throne and **Tetsuo** as his prime minister. Together the pair use their powers, healing the sick, wielding control of the faithful, and organizing their subjects into fighting units to defend their land. To increase the Empire's power, **Tetsuo** uses drugs and training to develop psychic abilities in certain of the subjects. Most faithful among their numerous followers are Tetsuo's girlfriend, **Kaori,** and his dapper ambitious assistant. Their headquarters is Neo-Tokyo's **Olympic Stadium.** To the east, **Lady**

Kaori Kiyoko Akira Masaru



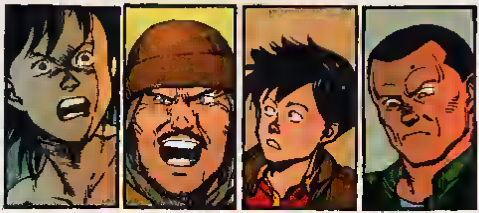
Miyako welcomes refugees to her shrine. In this, she is aided by **Kiyoko, Mesaru,** and a number of loyal psychically gifted monks.

The **Empire** is infiltrated by teams of spies and commando units from the outside world, led by American Lieutenant **George Yamada. Yamada** is under orders to assassinate **Akira,** even if it means taking innocent lives. To that end he and his men are equipped with biochemical armaments which take a tremendous toll on Tetsuo's trained psychics when the two groups meet in battle.

A fleet of foreign ships waits in **Tokyo Bay,** poised for action. Aboard an American naval vessel, an international conclave of of scientists and one Tibetan monk study the **Akira phenomenon** — which they've codenamed **Juvenile A.** One of the scientists — **Stanley Simmons** — goes ashore without military authorization, hoping desperately to implement a secret plan.

Meanwhile **Lady Miyako, Mesaru,** and **Kiyoko** convince **Kay** to join them in battle against **Tetsuo,** because **Kay** is a powerful medium through whom the others could project their powers and strike as one.

Kaneda, who's teamed up with **Kai** and **Joker** — a friend and a rival from his gang days — vows to kill **Tetsuo,** using most of their men, as well as such state-of-the-art weapons as they've salvaged, including laser rifles, flying platforms, and one caretaker robot. At the **Olympic Stadium,** they



Tetsuo | The Colonel | Kai | Lt. Yamada

find destruction and chaos. Their enemy is already under attack by **Kay,** Yamada's forces, the **Colonel,** and even by Tetsuo's own men. Tetsuo's lieutenant is so afraid of his leader's power, he tries to flee, murdering **Kaori** so she can't betray him.

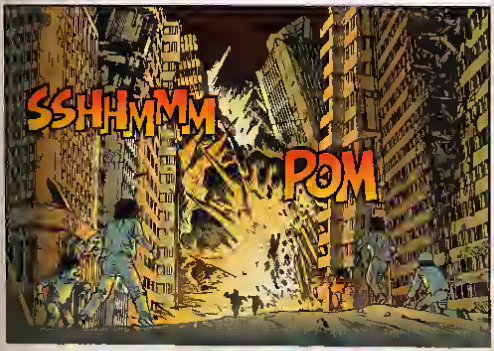
Tetsuo loses control in battle, and his artificial arm assumes a grossly mutated form. He runs amok, killing anyone who comes too close. His power has grown beyond what his body can contain and is now trying to absorb its surroundings. His body begins to alternate between a normal human form and an immense, uncontrollable, bloated grotesquerie.

Tetsuo finds and is mourning over **Kaori** when his lieutenant comes to him, cravenly pleading for help against Yamada's forces. The lieutenant and his loyalists die horribly, victims of the biochem weapons, while **Akira** looks placidly on. When **Yamada** shoots **Tetsuo, Tetsuo** is enraged, and **Yamada** dies a hideous death.

Ironically, the germs in the weapon affect **Tetsuo** like a drug, enabling him to reassert mastery over his powers. A duel in the stadium ensues, with **Kay** and **Kaneda** using lasers and telekinesis against their enemy. **Kaneda** sends **Kai** to safety with **Akira,** and **Kai** hands the boy over to another gang member, hoping to find **Joker** and return to the fray.

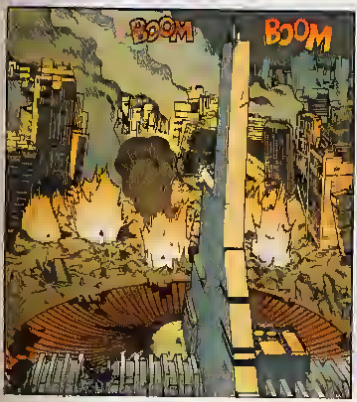
Then, the international fleet in the harbor sends fighter planes to rain death upon **Neo-Tokyo.**

Kaneda **Kay** **Stanley Simmons** **Joker**


SSHHMMM
POM

HERE THEY COME!

POM
POM
POM


BOOM
BOOM

THE AMERICAN AIR FORCE?!

BEYOND QUESTION! THEY'RE CARPET BOMBING THE CITY!

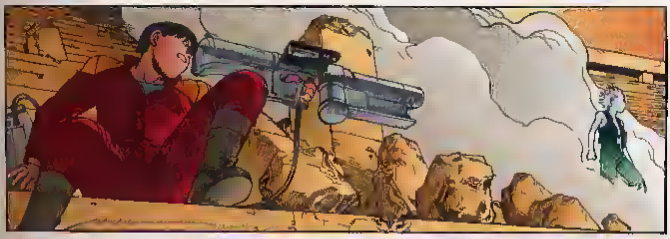
KABOOM
RRUMBLE
LOOK AFTER MASARU AND KIYOKO!
RRUM
AAUGH!
KRASH
LADY MIYAKO!
NEVER MIND ME!
MASARU!
KIYOKO!

KAY!!
SHMM
BOOM
BOOM
HUNH?!
POM
POW
THEY'RE BOMBING US!

YOU SON OF A BITCH! COME DOWN HERE AND FIGHT LIKE A MAN!
BUDDA
BUDDA
IN THE NAME OF THE GREAT TOKYO EMPIRE--
--BANZAAA!!
FWUP
KA BOOM
TAK TAK TAK TAK
!
BOM
YIPE!

SHUUUUF
pok
!
FWHOM
KAY!
THOK
SHUF

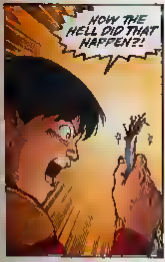
HM?
POM
HUH?
THOSE BASTARDS
PUTTING ON A BIG SHOW_



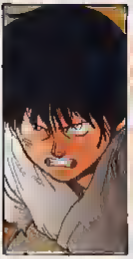
KLK

IT'S GONNA BE GETTIN' CROWDED AROUND HERE — SO I'M DECLARING THIS PART OF THE PARTY OFFICIALLY OVER.

??


HOW THE HELL DID THAT HAPPEN?!

...OOH...



WHAT--?!
KRAK

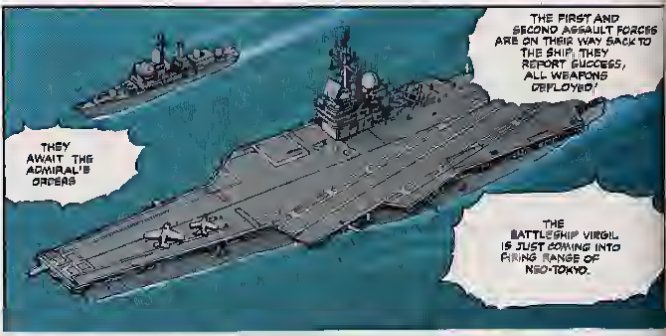
BETTER MOVE QUICKLY IF YOU DON'T WANT TO BE CRUSHED.

GASP!!
MY... MY ENTIRE BODY... FEELS... LIKE
!!!LEAD!
PUK
OW!!
OOH!
SMAK
YEEEK!
Smat Smat Smat Smat
SHRRUM
SHM

POM
YOU'VE GOT YOUR OWN GRAVITATIONAL WELL. WONDER HOW LONG YOU'LL SURVIVE THAT!
RRUMM
RRRRAK
KRRRN
KANEDAAAA!

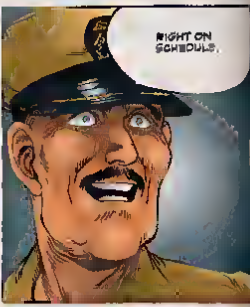
TETSUO!
tak
KANEDA!
EAT THIS!

THOK
WHOP
rattle
Krrumble

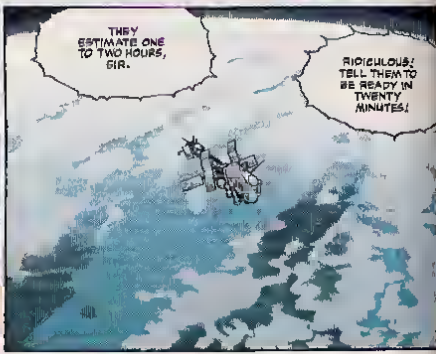

THE FIRST AND SECOND ASSAULT FORCES ARE ON THEIR WAY BACK TO THE SHIP. THEY REPORT SUCCESS, ALL WEAPONS DEPLOYED!
THEY AWAIT THE ADMIRAL'S ORDERS
THE BATTLESHIP VIRGIL IS JUST COMING INTO FIRING RANGE OF NEO-TOKYO.

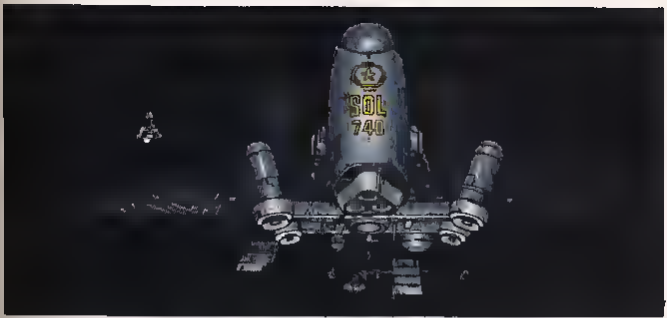
TELL THEM TO LAUNCH AN ATTACK ON THE CITY AT ONCE.
AYE, SIR!

"FLOYD" IS ENTERING ORBITAL RANGE.


RIGHT ON SCHEDULE.

HOW SOON WILL THEY BE READY TO FIRE?


THEY ESTIMATE ONE TO TWO HOURS, SIR.
RIDICULOUS! TELL THEM TO BE READY IN TWENTY MINUTES!


SOL
740

ACTIVATION
ALIGNMENT
OF THE VISUAL
TRACKING
SYSTEM!

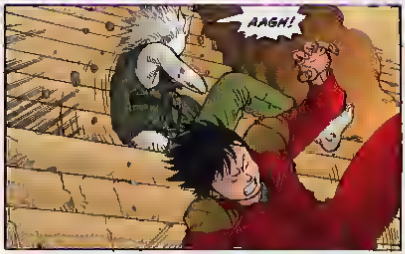
..UHHN..
HELL..
TOK
;GASP..
CHAAARGE!
THUK
THAM

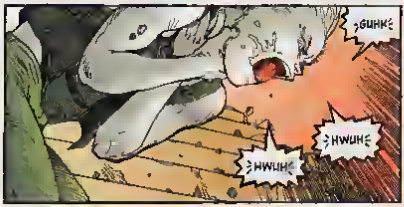
PANT
PANT
WHEEZE
GULK
DON'T--!
POW
THAP
HOW'S THAT YOU DAMN JUNKIE!
LET'S SEE YOU GET UP NOW!
AAH...
SHUT IT!
YAAUGH!

FOOOM
RRUMBLE
?!

!
TETSUOOO!!
WHAT...?!
DIE..!
BOOM
WAAH...!
TAK

KAK


AAGH!


GUHK
HWUH
HWUH

THAT WAS FOR YAMAGATA AN' ALL THE OTHERS YOU MURDERED!
I HOPE YOU CHOKE!
GUHK
ICK

WHOOOM
YIPE!
...OO...
D@H...
.....?
KOFF!
KAFF!
GURK!
G-STAY...
STAY BACK!

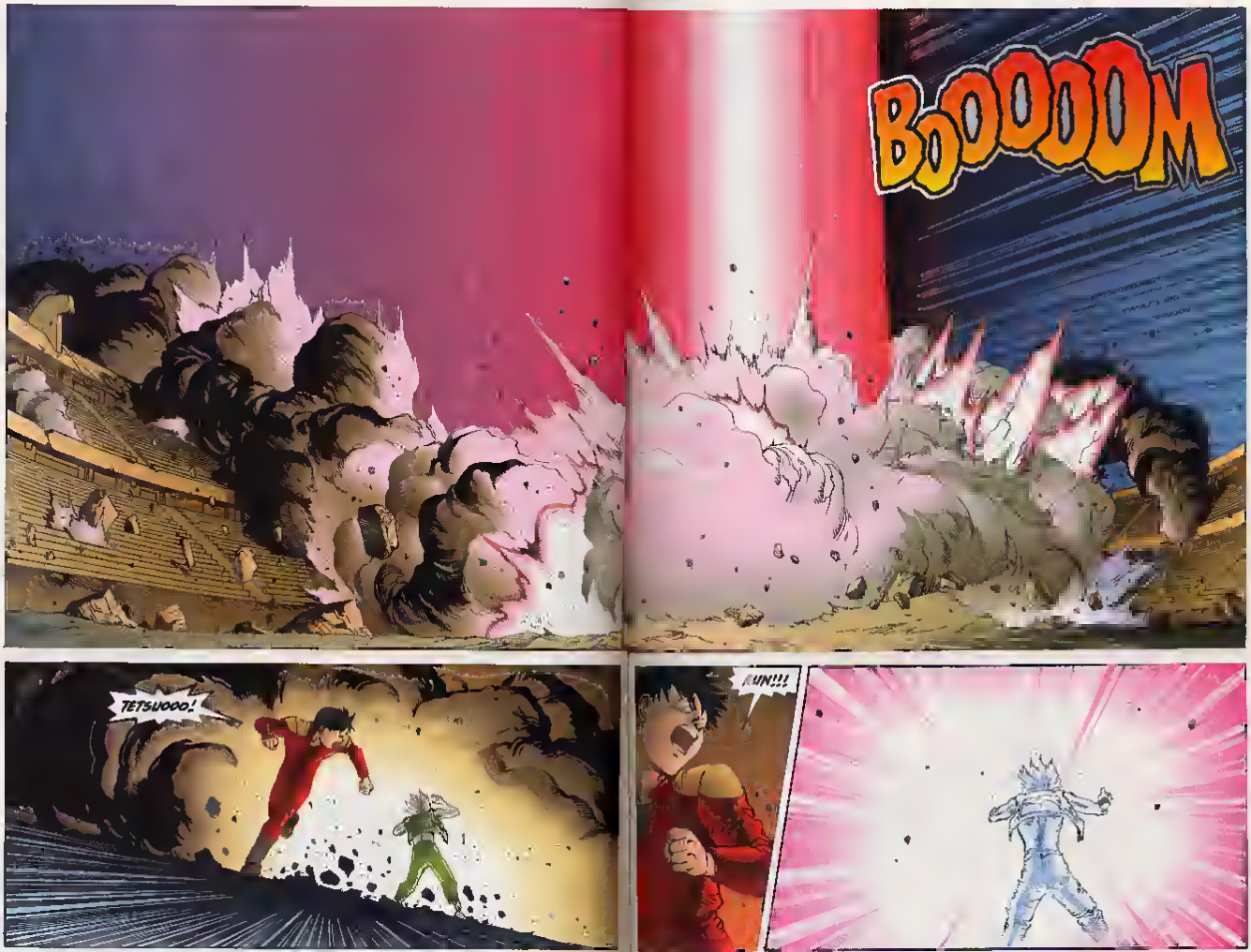
WHAT'S WRONG? HAVING TROUBLE?
GACK!
KOPF!
KOPF!
KAPF!
YOU'VE...
...LOST YOUR GRIP ON YOUR P WER, HUNH?

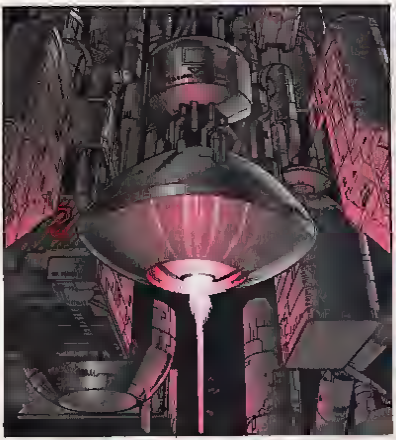
ANSWER ME!
LET GO!
SHUT UP!
I WANNA HEAR WHAT HAPPENED TO YOU! COME ON!
TETSUO!

KANEDAA!
HEEEEEY!
WHERE ARE YOU?!
KANEDAAAAA?!
FLASH

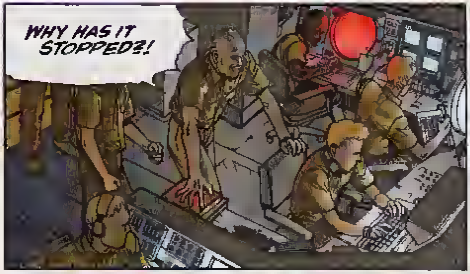
HUNH?!
BOOM

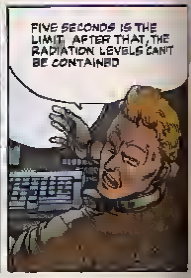
SHHHAK

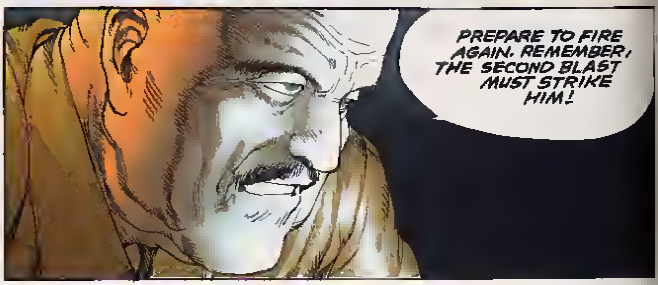

BOOOOOM
TETSUOOO!
RUN!!!



SH'HM

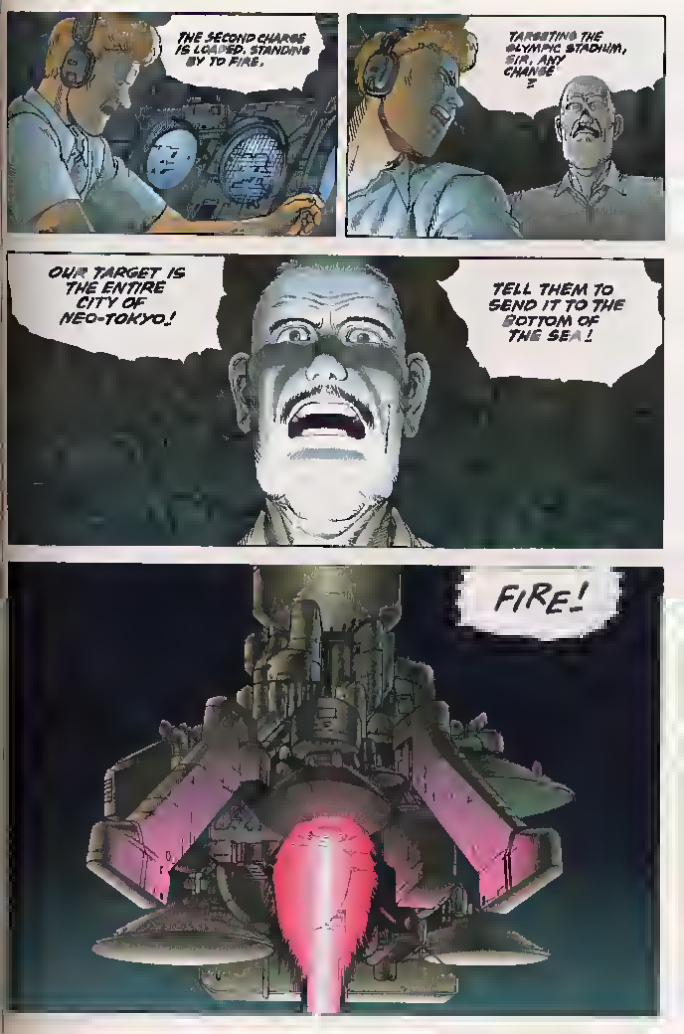

WHY HAS IT STOPPED?!

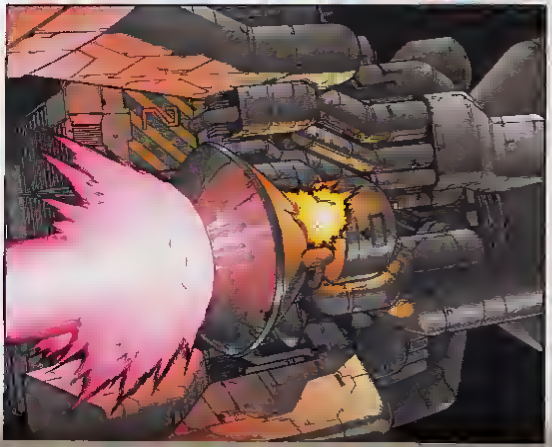

FIVE SECONDS IS THE LIMIT. AFTER THAT, THE RADIATION LEVELS CAN'T BE CONTAINED


PREPARE TO FIRE AGAIN. REMEMBER, THE SECOND BLAST MUST STRIKE HIM!

AAOOUU!

VLLSM
DWOM
FWUUM


THE SECOND CHARGE IS LOADED. STANDING BY TO FIRE.
TARGETING THE OLYMPIC STADIUM, SIR. ANY CHANGE?
OUR TARGET IS THE ENTIRE CITY OF NEO-TOKYO!
TELL THEM TO SEND IT TO THE BOTTOM OF THE SEA!
FIRE!



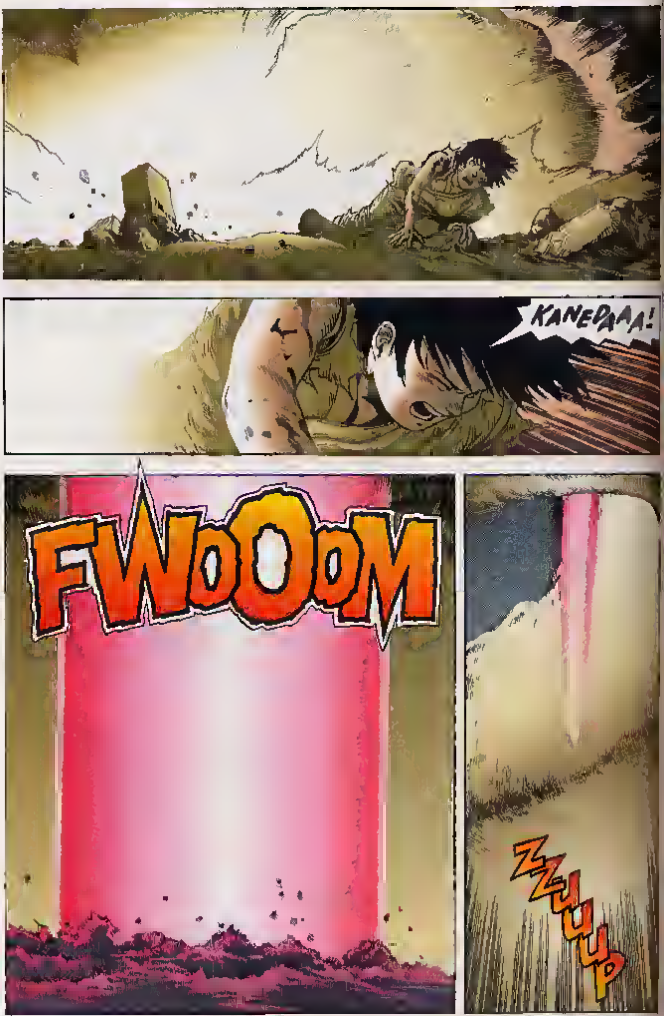
TETSUO@O!
KAAAAV!
DAMN IT!
HEY! HEY YOU, UH THERE! WHY DON'T YOU FIRE AT ME AGAIN?! I DARE YOU!
!
AKIRA?!
WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE?

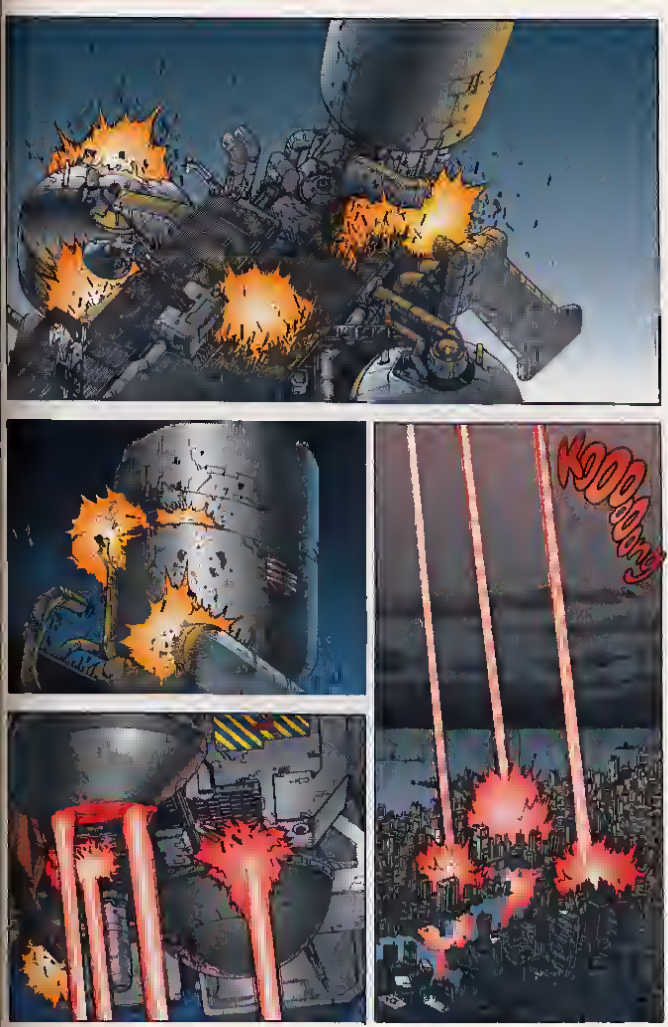
YOU WERE WITH KAI! WHERE IS HE?
HEY! KAAAAI!
...CALLING ME...
HUHH?!
WHO'S CALLING YOU?
UH-OH!
OOH
HMM

YAAAUGH!
KOOOONG
VIIIIIIIII
KANEPAAAA!
FWOOOM
KOOO
NG

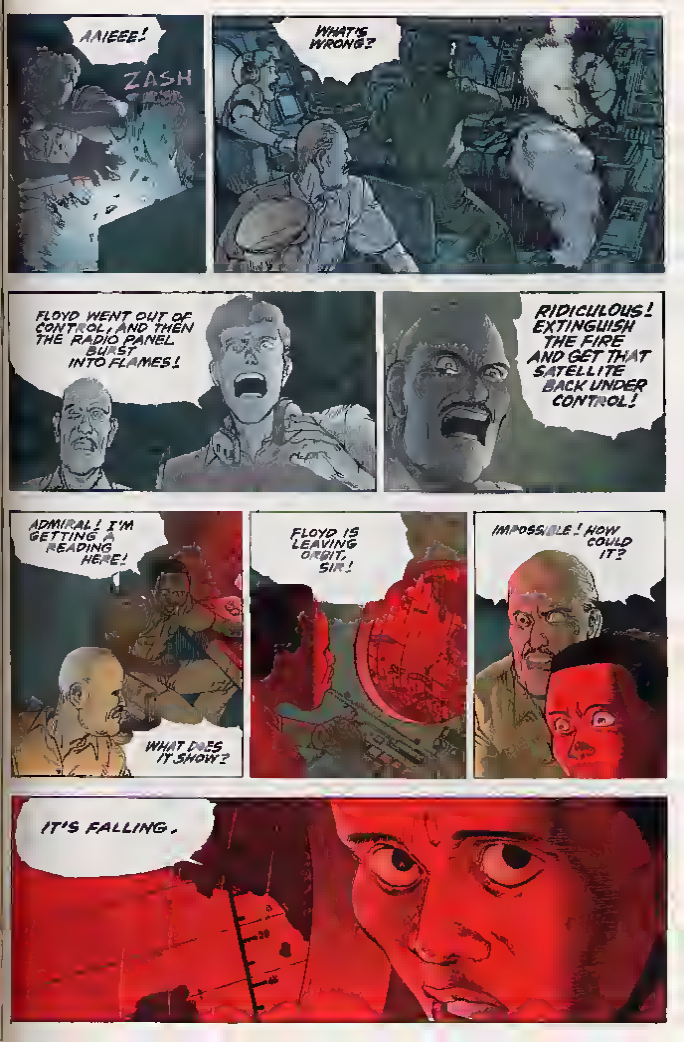
OH...
--CRAP!
AAUGH!
KOONNNG
KANEDAAAA!
JOKER!

GERONIMO!
NO! IDIOT!
HOP
YAAUGH!
YIPE!
JOOOONER!
HOLD TIGHT!
CRASH
SSHHUUP

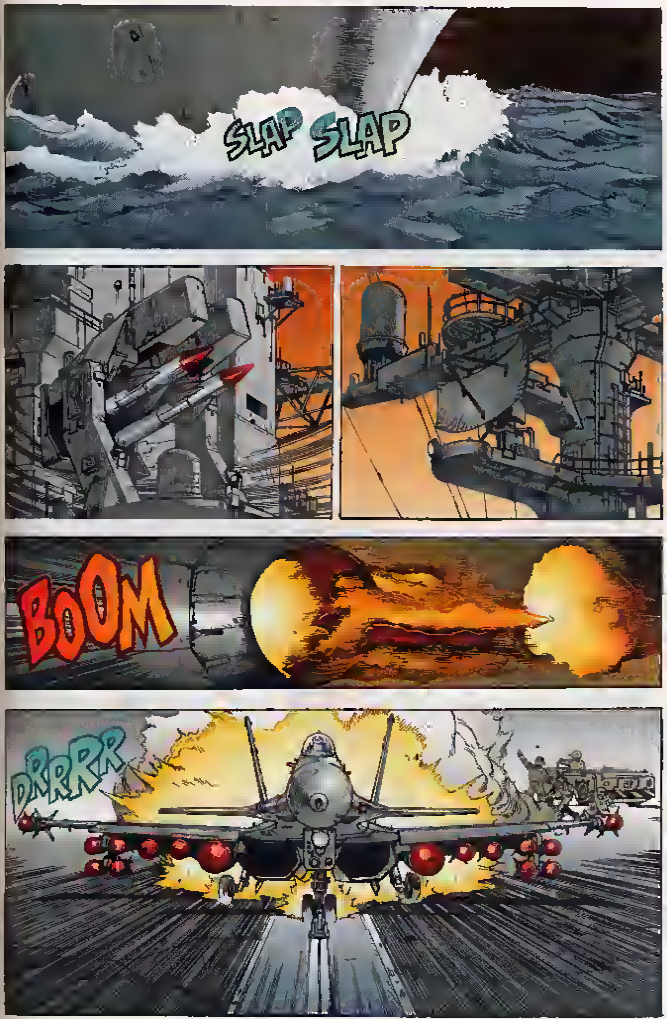

KANEDAAA!
FWOOOM
ZZUUUP


KOOOOOM

KR-RRUMBLE
RRATTLE
RRUMMM
AAUGH!
AT ALL COSTS, PROTECT MASAMI AND KIYOKO!


AAIEEE!
ZASH
WHAT'S WRONG?
FLOYD WENT OUT OF CONTROL! AND THEN THE RADIO PANEL BURST INTO FLAMES!
RIDICULOUS! EXTINGUISH THE FIRE AND GET THAT SATELLITE BACK UNDER CONTROL!
ADMIRAL! I'M GETTING A READING HERE!
WHAT DOES IT SHOW?
FLOYD IS LEAVING ORBIT, SIR!
IMPOSSIBLE! HOW COULD IT?
IT'S FALLING.

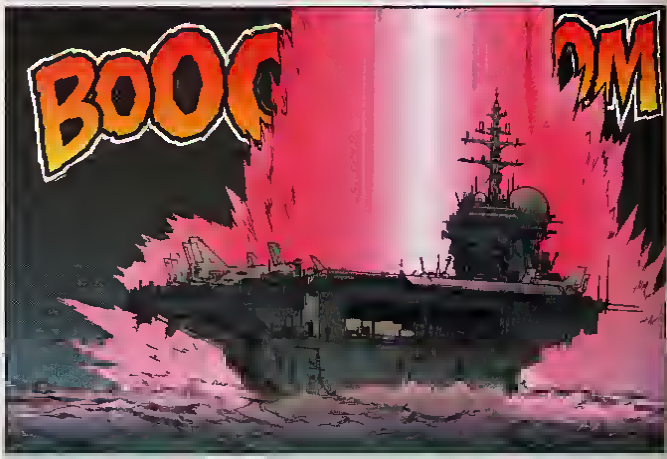
WHAT DID YOU SAY?
FLOYD IS FALLING DIRECTLY TOWARD THE FLEET.
IT IS COMING TOWARDS...
...THIS SHIP.
HOW LONG UNTIL IMPACT?!
AT THE CURRENT RATE OF DESCENT, THIRTY MINUTES. MAYBE LESS.
TELL THE CAPTAIN TO TAKE EVASIVE ACTION!
ARM ALL MISSILES!
LAUNCH ALL PLANES!

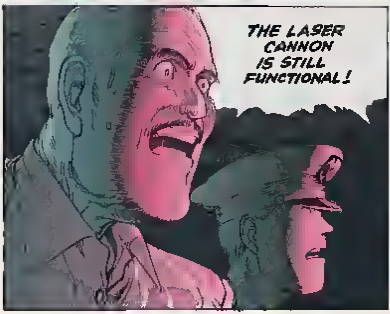

SLAP SLAP
BOOM
DRRRR

WE'LL NEED A HELICOPTER TO EVACUATE THE SCIENTISTS.
WE'RE TRYING TO LOCATE ONE NOW, SIR... PERHAPS YOU COULD ALL LEAVE TOGETHER ...?
ARE YOU SUGGESTING I ABANDON SHIP? UNDER FIRE? RIDICULOUS!
RRRNN
WHAT?!
JUVENILE A
WE'RE BEING EVACUATED? WHY?
ON WHOSE ORDERS?
IT'S AN EMERGENCY. WE'RE AT BATTLE STATIONS NOW, AND THE ADMIRAL FEELS...
HOW DID THINGS REACH SUCH A PASS?
GIVE US A FULL STATUS REPORT!

I'M AFRAID THAT...
I'M NOT IN A POSITION TO ANSWER.
HOW LONG HAVE WE?
NOT LONG ENOUGH.
KARMA TANG!!
ALREADY IT IS HERE WITH US!
THE BRIDGE IS DANGEROUS, ADMIRAL. AT LEAST GO TO THE CONTROL ROOM!
NEVER MIND THAT! WHAT'S FLOYD'S CURRENT ALTITUDE?
62 MILES, AND IT'S TRAVELING AT 650 MILES PER HOUR, AND WILL ENTER THE ATMOSPHERE ALMOST VERTICALLY
SHHHUM
85

FLASH


BOOC
?M

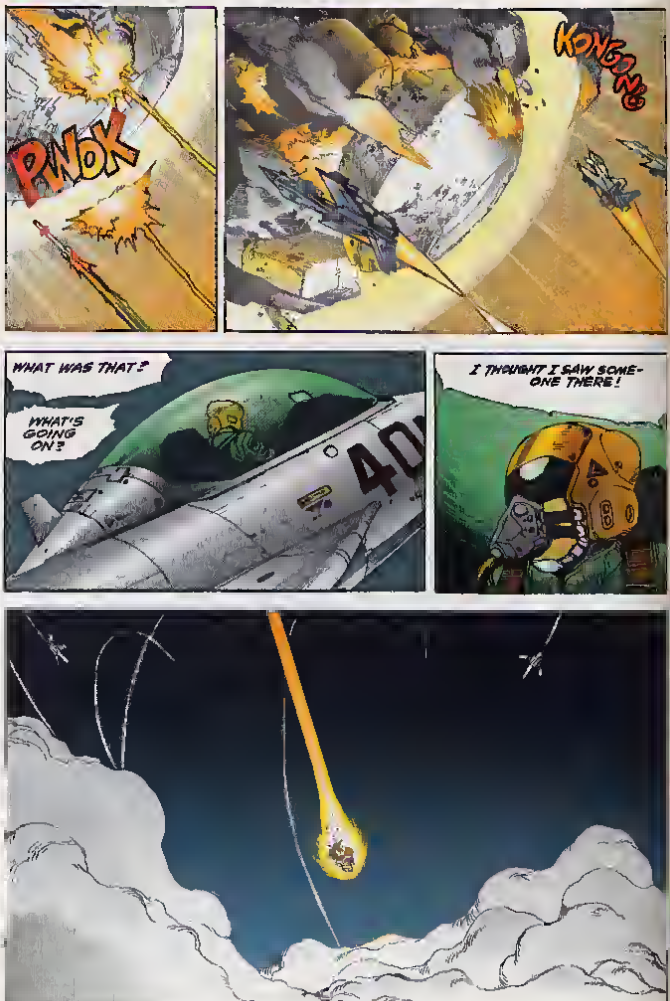

THE LASER CANNON IS STILL FUNCTIONAL!

WHERE'RE OUR PLANES? TELL THEM TO COUNTER-ATTACK!

LOCKED ON TARGET! COMMENCING ATTACK NOW!
402
FIRE!!
SHUDD
SHUDD
AFTERSHOCK STARTING AHEAD STARBOARD!
SET THE PROW HORIZONTAL TO THE WAVES!
KONNG

GONGONGONG
AUGH!
YIIIIPE!
VISUAL CONTACT!

FIRE!
ZZZZAAP
ZAP
ZAP
SHHUMMM


PWOK
KONGONG
WHAT WAS THAT?
WHAT'S GOING ON?
I THOUGHT I SAW SOMEONE THERE!

THE HULL'S BEEN BREACHED... RUPTURED...
IT'S GOING TO HIT!
MISSILES ...FIRE ALL...

AKIRA: readers respond

Over the years, Epic Comics has received hundreds of letters from **Akira** fans everywhere. Below is a look at **Akira** through the eyes of its supporters.

I picked up **Akira** #1 today and read it. I found the translation to be clean, smooth and articulated without sacrificing the integrity of the original. I was able to handle the coloring at first glance. I now feel that the colors have added another dimension to the original, a tantalizing variation on a theme.

Thank you for a great job!

— Jeffrey C.F. Wong
Aurora, Colorado

Yesterday I purchased **Akira** #1, and I must say that I am impressed. I had heard of this comic nearly two years before, but knew nothing about it, except that it was supposedly very good. Then, just yesterday I walked into my local comics store and saw the first issue on the shelves. The art stunned me and the color melded perfectly into a comic made for black and white. And the story! The terrific pacing revealed just enough to make me really want to find out more. If the other issues are only one-thirs as good as this one, **Akira** could easily become one of my favorite comics.

— Richard Clark
Pasadena, California

Epic comics has done a truly great thing by translating and adapting **Akira** for American release. The colorization of Mr. Otomo's work is also an excellent idea. I hope that **Akira** will meet with the success that it so richly deserves.

— David B. Mitchell
Berkeley, California

As a collector of translated Japanese Manga, I was horrified when I learned that you would be coloring **Akira**, which I believed would damage the quality of the artwork. I was most happily surprised by your end results. Otomo's work lends itself well to color and your team has done an excellent job of capturing the true sense of the title through the use of muted tones. I have found **Akira** to be an astounding comic and I applaud you for releasing it to the American public.

— Jason Huff
Greenwood, Indiana

Akira has grabbed me like no other comic. After 5 issues or so of the Epic **Akira**, I knew I was on to something special. I bought the Japanese versions, started subscribing to **Young Magazine** and ordered **Domu** and **Highway Star**.

— Woody Compton
Tallahassee, Florida

First we want to thank Mr. Otomo, Kodansha Ltd. and Epic Comics for introducing to the United States a superb manga, **Akira**. Secondly, we want to introduce ourselves. Jan C. — 35 years old, father, and Jan L. — 7 years old, son. We like **Akira** so much that we bought the movie at a recent Star Trek convention. What an outstanding story and a high quality production! We have discovered that we just can't seem to get enough of **Akira**.

— Jan C. and Jan L. Childress
Brooklyn, New York

Otomo may very well be the single best artist to come out of Japan. His work is not only more clear than many of the others I've seen, it also conveys action extremely well. He has a 3D quality in his work that gives the visual effects more of a punch than most artists — on either side of the globe.

— David Peattie
Concord, California

This is the most excellent comic I ever have seen! Katsuhiro Otomo rocks! Most high praises to all the Epic crew for this project! To tell you how excellent I think this book is — I am trying to learn Japanese 'cause you guys just can't translate **Akira** fast enough — plus I've got to get my hands on Otomo's other books.

— Duncan Clarke
Terre Haute, Indiana

I have always been an admirer of Jepanese comic art, that is until I reed **Akira** #22. I then becerne a fan of the stories as well.

You see, I had bought the issue strictly for the examples of manga art, which I intended to copy. I brought the issue home and opened it, having my Bristol board and art pencils next to me. The first three peges contained, as you know, a synopsis of what had happened previously. I figured I might as well read it for the background information.

I wes engrossed. The tale of Akira, Kay, Kaneda and the others fascinated me. As I picked up my book, my eyes fell upon the first page of the story. Within 15 minutes, I had read the whole book. twice.

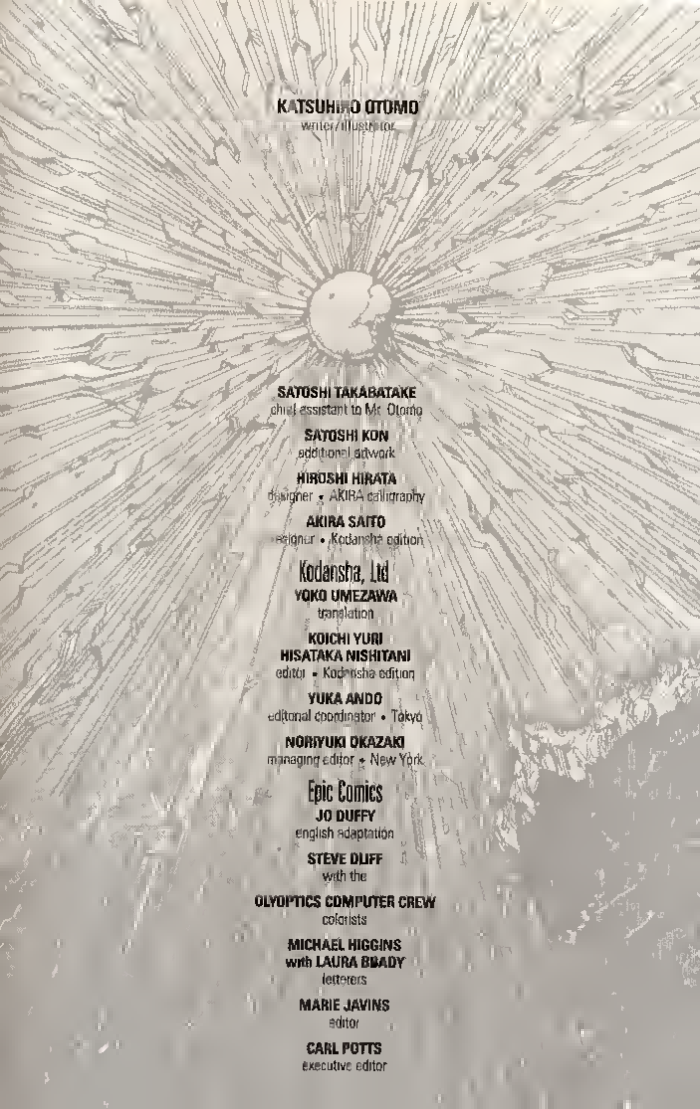
I gingerly opened the book to a page with excellent views end set out to copy your art style. 20 torn pages and four broken pencils leter, I surrendered to the bare facts: the art was just plain too good. I read the book again. I was astonished at your attention to detail and your sense of proportion. Your writing was flawless.

So, Mr. Otomo, I would like to raise my het to a brilliant writer, artist and creator. Thank you for **Akira** and thenk you for your great contribution to the comic field.

— Jordan C. Beasley, age 11
Sacramento, Califomia

WOW! Reading this installment (**Akira** #23) was very much akin to the first time I sat in a Cinerama-equipped 3-projector movie theater and watched Stanley Kubrick's **2001: A Space Odyssey**. It's not everyday that I come across a comic book that really deserves to be called ewe-inspiring.

— Henry R. Kujawa
Camden, New Jersey



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From high above Neo-Tokyo ceases to be a city of the living, becoming instead a target for the soon to be dead American bombers drop terrible payloads toward the ravaged streets as weapon platforms dance at the edge of space, firing arcane rays of hi-tech destruction down on a battlefield of men and something more than man. From below, the telekinetic power that is Tetsuo rages to be unleashed anew, promising awesome revenge for this latest attack from nations fearful of the unknowable might that is Akira.

And trapped between the heavens and hell on earth, an anxious humanity all too aware of their own mortality.

KATSUHIRO OTOMO'S

AKIRA

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